

Contact the Elderly do the Fringe

Contact the Elderly have been taking some older people to Fringe shows thanks to a donation of Edinburgh Festival Fringe vouchers.

The charity received £1800 of Fringe vouchers and bus tickets as part of the Festival's outreach programme marking its 70th anniversary.

Some of the shows they went to include the Rat Pack and a doo-wop show at Out of the Blue.



Flo and Irene

Irene, 86, and Flo, 83, visited their very first Fringe show with their volunteer driver Eve Dick. Irene said:

"I had a fantastic time. I haven't been to a Fringe show for many years as I find it more difficult to get out of the house now, and hadn't really considered going to anything in the festival."

Flo added: "I am so glad that I was able to take up this generous offer with Eve's help, it was really lovely. I recently moved to Edinburgh and have never been to the Fringe before. Irene and I are very grateful to Eve, Contact the Elderly and Edinburgh Fringe for making this possible."

Eve has driven Flo and Irene to Contact the Elderly's monthly afternoon tea parties since their group launched earlier this year.

She said: "Edinburgh is abuzz in August but it is something that many older people miss out on. We had a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon. This generous gesture of free vouchers is

very much appreciated. The staff were extremely helpful and took Irene and Flo up in the lift at the appropriate time and the first couple of rows were designated for disabled access, so it was all a lot easier than I had envisaged. They are both very good company so we had a great girls' afternoon out."



Jean with the Rat Pack

Jean, 88, watched the Rat Pack perform with her volunteer driver Pam Learmonth.

She said: "I had a fantastic time. I love going to a Fringe show but I find it more difficult to get out of the house now, and never go out alone in the evening. The singers were lovely and though I am in my 80s, I felt as though I was 18 again listening to them perform the music I love. I am so glad that I was able to take up this generous offer."

Contact the Elderly has 21 groups in Edinburgh, giving older people who live alone the opportunity to enjoy an afternoon out of the house once a month in the company of others in their position, as well as with volunteers from all backgrounds. A volunteer driver collects one or two guests and accompanies them to a volunteer host's home for an afternoon of tea, cake and conversation.

Jennifer Kaney, Development Officer at Contact the Elderly, said: "This incredibly generous donation has been very well-received by our guests and volunteers and we would like to offer our sincere thanks.

"One of the main issues facing many of our guests is the monotony of life in older age when they are less able to get out and about. That is why outings such as these, as well as our tea parties, make such a difference. Breaking the cycle of social isolation and enjoying life is so important in terms of mental and physical health.

“Contact the Elderly’s tea parties are very popular in Edinburgh, as well as throughout the country, but we always know there are more people we could support and will continue to develop more tea party groups in the city.”

To find out more about becoming a volunteer with, or guest of, Contact the Elderly in Edinburgh, please contact Jennifer.kaney@contact-the-elderly.org.uk or 01786 235034.